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ABSTRACT

The rapid increase in the number of families with two wage-earners has contributed significantly to changes in family structure and function in the past three decades; a current belief holds that wives who share the income-earner role have a right to expect more assistance from their husbands with such family tasks as meal preparations, cleaning, laundry, and child care. To determine the joint effects of sex-role orientation, role salience, income, and family type on husbands' sharing of seven family task categories, (i.e., meal preparation tasks, child care tasks, maintenance and repair tasks, management of family activities, financial management, cleaning tasks, and lawn and garden tasks) a sample of husbands (N=166) drawn from a larger national sample of married college and university administrators (36% from one-career families, 23% from career-earner families, and 42% from two-career families) were surveyed. Statistical analyses showed that sex-role orientation significantly influenced a husband's reported sharing of family tasks (i.e., husbands who agreed that interchangeable roles are the preferred norm accepted more responsibilities for family tasks); and marriage to an employed spouse was associated with more sharing of such tasks. In general, a combination of tangible (wife's employment status) and intangible (egalitarian sex-role orientation, and role salience) resources seemed to be most influential on husbands' task sharing behavior. A glossary of terms is appended. (WAS)

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ROLE SHARING: FACTORS INFLUENCING INCREASED INVOLVEMENT OF HUSBANDS IN FAMILY TASKS

Abstract

This study, based on data from a sample of 166 husbands, explores the relationship between the amount of husband sharing in seven family task categories and sex-role orientation, role salience, income, and family type. The results suggest that for husbands, it is a combination of tangible (wife's employment status) and intangible (egalitarian sex-role orientation and role salience) resources that seems to most influence task sharing behavior.

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ROLE SHARING: FACTORS INFLUENCING INCREASED INVOLVEMENT OF HUSBANDS IN FAMILY TASKS

One factor which has contributed significantly to changes in family structure and function in the past three decades is the rapid increase in the number of families with two earners (Rawlings, 1978). The increased importance of wive's earnings to family economic well-being lends credence to the belief that wives who share the income-earner role in the family have an implied right to expect more involvement and assistance from their husbands in carrying out family tasks such as meal preparation, cleaning, laundry, and child care (Blood and Wolfe, 1960; Scanzoni, 1980).

Research involving employed spouses acknowledges that the changes in performance of family roles that accompany shifts in traditional employment patterns require negotiation (Holmstrom, 1973; Scanzoni, 1979). Such negotiation involves solving differences in role expectations through communication and compromise (Scanzoni, 1972). The outcome of this negotiation process is debatable. For example, time-budget studies indicate that wive's employment has little impact on husband's contribution to family tasks. Other researchers report that employed wives decrease the amount of time they spend performing family tasks while husbands increase their time allocation. This makes the division of family tasks more equitable, but doesn't change the fact that task performance is still primarily the wife's responsibility (Epstein, 1971; Scanzoni and Fox, 1980). And finally, Pleck and Rustad (1981) offer still another conclusion from their research. They state that total work time, including household or family work, of employed wives is only 12 minutes per day more than that of their husbands, a statistically insignificant difference.

Limited literature was found identifying variables that contribute to a more equitable division of family tasks. Identification of factors associated with increased husband sharing of tasks could provide both theoretical and substantive contributions to the field of family studies. For example, regardless of the division of tasks between wives and husbands in the aggregate, there exists s subgroup of husbands who share all or part of the family tasks (Model, 1982; Perrucci et al., 1978). But, knowledge is scarce concerning the characteristics or factors associated with such sharing. This additional knowledge could lead to the development of strategies for achieving a more equitable task distribution between spouses who are desirous of such assistance (Pleck, 1979). Such knowledge could also expand family research and theory development beyond what Scanzoni and Fox (1980) describe as the basic research question of the impact of income on the division of family tasks.

The primary purpose of this research is to determine the effect of sex-role orientation, role salience, income, and family type on husband sharing of family tasks. Though past research revealed some possible links between the sharing of family tasks and sex-role orientation (Perrucci, et al., 1978; Scanzoni, 1978; Stafford et al., 1977), role salience (Bailyn, 1970; Rapoport and Rapoport, 1976; Safilios-Rothschild, 1970), income (Ericksen et al., 1979; Nickols and Metzen, 1978; Papanek, 1973; Scanzoni, 1978), and family type (Scanzoni, 1980), no prior research has been undertaken to assess the joint effect of these theoretically related variables.

This research relies on data collected in April through June, 1979 from a national sample of married college and university administrators and their spouses. The study included persons in central administrative positions as well as deans of academic and research units. A census was taken of the 299

female administrators listed from member institutions of the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges and a 10 percent random sample (300) of the 2959 listed male administrators. This procedure resulted in a total sample size of 599. A series of three follow-up mailings yielded responses from 442 of the possible 599 respondents, 73.8 percent. The present investigation used a sample of 166 husbands (36 percent were members of one-career families, 23 percent were members of career-earner families, and 42 percent were members of two-career families).

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Multiple regression analysis was used to determine the effect of 11 independent variables (five dimensions of sex-role orientation, three dimensions of role salience, individual income, family income, and family type) on family task sharing for husbands. The independent variables were entered into separate stepwise regression analyses with each of the seven categories of family tasks. The stepwise technique eliminated variables having little impact (Standardized Betas) on the family task to be explained. Only those variables entering the analysis of the .05 significance level were retained in the regression model.

Two dimensions of sex-role orientation were found to be significant predictors of meal preparation tasks. The HCC role (Husband as Coprovider and Coparent) had the largest influence of three significant predictors on meal preparation tasks. The HCC role was also one of the significant predictors of sharing of child care tasks. Similarly, the WC role (Wife as Complement) was found to be one of three significant predictors of sharing of child care tasks, as well as being predictive of shared cleaning tasks.

Family role salience was one of three significant predictors of meal preparation tasks and was also the only significant predictor of the sharing of tasks associated with management of family activities. Community role

salience was a significant predictor of the sharing of maintenance and repair tasks. Family income was one of three predictors of shared cleaning tasks and was the only predictor of lawn and garden task sharing. Individual income was not significantly predictive of sharing in any family task.

Family type was found to be a significant predictor of sharing of several family tasks. Husbands who were in one-career families were less inclined to share meal preparation tasks than were other husbands. Husbands in two-career families reported sharing child care to a greater extent than other husbands. Similarly, being a member of a two-career family was the only independent variable significant to the prediction of sharing of financial management tasks. Finally, the two-career family type had the largest impact of three significant variables on the sharing of cleaning tasks.

In conclusion, a major finding of this study is that sex-role orientation significantly influences husband's reported sharing of family tasks. Specifically, husbands who tend to agree that interchangeable rather than specialized roles are the perferred norms for spousal behavior accept more responsibility for tasks associated with child care, meal preparation, and cleaning; tasks identified by past research as more time consuming than other family tasks (Robinson, 1977; Walker and Woods, 1976).

In addition, for this sample of husbands, motivation to accept more responsibility for family tasks was also related to their having an employed wife. Marriage to an employed spouse (especially a career-oriented spouse) was associated with more sharing of child care, meal preparation, and cleaning tasks. Husband's degree of sharing may have reflected an increased awareness of the need for an equitable allocation of work at home given the time constraints associated with multiple roles. By the same token, wives may be less willing to accept gender-linked patterns of task division and be

more likely to use their employment status and income as leverage to negotiate for increased sharing.

Role salience was found to be a less important predictor variable than sex-role orientation or family type. For this sample of husbands, salience of family and community roles appears to have some slight influence on family task sharing while employment role salience has none. For husbands, it is a combination of tangible (wife's employment status) and intangible (egalitarian sex-role orientation and role salience) resources that seems to most influence task sharing behavior.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Family Task Categories

Twenty-two tasks identified as commonly associated with management and maintenance of the household were factor analyzed (Walker and Woods, 1976). Seven task categories emerged from the analysis and were labeled as follows: meal preparation tasks, child care tasks, maintenance and repair tasks, management of family activities, financial management, cleaning tasks, and lawn and garden tasks.

Sex-Role Orientation

Sex-role orientation refers to preferences the individual has for roles that reflect normative prescriptions for behavior in the enactment of family and employment responsibilities (Scanzoni, 1975). Twenty-two items were factor analyzed and five dimensions of sex-role orientation were identified: Wife as Complement (WC), Wife as Coprovider and Codecisioner (WCC), Wife as Employed Parent (WEP), Husband as Provider and Head (HPH), and Husband as Coprovider and Coparent (HCC). Each dimension was viewed as a measure of sex-role preference on a continuum from traditional to egalitarian.

Role Salience

Role salience was described as the relative importance or value the individual places on the enactment of various life roles. Factor analysis led to the organization of seven scale items into three dimensions: community role, employment role, and family role (Condie and Doan, 1976).

Family Type

One-Career Family: The husband was employed in a career position and the wife was not employed outside the home.

Career-Earner Family: The husband was employed in a career position and the wife was employed either full or part-time in a non-professional occupation (Scanzoni, 1980).

Two-Career Family: Both husband and wife were employed in career positions (Scanzoni, 1980).

TABLE 1. CATEGORIES OF FAMILY TASK SHARING

Factor Name		Item	Factor Loading
Meal Preparation Tasks	B3	Food Preparation	.88
	B1	Planning Menus	.86
	B2	Shopping for Food	.68
	B4	After-Meal Cleanup	.48
Child Care Tasks	B14	Chauffering Child(ren)	.90
	B15	Attending Functions with Child(ren)	.90
	B16	Daily Care of Child(ren)	.90
Maintenance and Repair Tasks	B13	Minor Car Repairs	.77
	B12	Washing Car(s)	.69
	B9	Repair and Maintenance of the House	.54
Management of Family Activities	B22	Organizing Social Activities	.75
	B21	Planning Family Recreation	.74
	B20	Coordinating Day-to-Day Family Activities	.48
Financial Management	B18	Paying Bills and Balancing the Checkbook	.71
	B19	Planning Investments	.70
Cleaning Tasks	B7	Vacuuming	.77
	B8	Other Cleaning	.76
	B6	Laundry	.48
Lawn and Garden Tasks	B10	Gardening	.80
	B11	Lawn Mowing and Care	.73

TABLE 2. DIMENSIONS OF ROLE SALIENCE

Factor Name		Item	Factor Loading
Community Role	D20	Participant in Community Services	.82
	D23	Participant in Social and Recreational Activities	.68
	D24	Participant in Church or Other Religious Activities	.63
Employment Role	D17	Income Provider	.85
	D22	Member of Professional Organization(s)	.69
Family Role	D19	Husband or Wife	.78
	D21	Parent	.72

TABLE 3. DIMENSIONS OF SEX-ROLE ORIENTATION

Factor Name	Item		Factor Loading
Wife as Complement (WC)	E2[a]	A married woman's most important task in life should be caring for her husband and child (ren).	.82
	E3[a]	A married woman's greatest reward and satisfaction come through her child(ren).	.80
	E8[a]	A wife should give up her job whenever it interferes with fulfilling her roles as wife and mother.	.80
Wife as Coprovider and Codecisioner (WCC)	E5	A woman's job should be just as important to her as encouraging her husband in his job.	.78
	E6	A wife should be able to make long-range plans for her occupation just as her husband does.	.77
	E1	A wife should have equal authority with her husband in making family decisions.	.72
Wife as Employed Parent (WEP)	E11	An employed mother is able to establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who is not employed.	.76
	E10	More day care centers and nursery schools should be available for mothers who choose to work.	.69
	E4[a]	A mother of young children should work only if the family needs the money.	.67
Husband as Provider and Head (HPH)	E12[a]	A married man's chief responsibility should be his job.	.79
	E13[a]	A married man's most important task in life should be providing economic support for his wife and child(ren).	.77
	E17[a]	A married man's greatest reward and satisfaction should be through his job.	.74
	E16[a]	The husband should be the head of the family.	.61
	E19[a]	A husband should have final authority in making family decisions.	.58
Husband as Coprovider and Coparent (HCC)	E21	If both husband and wife are employed, he should be willing to share child care responsibilities.	.79
	E20	If both husband and wife are employed, he should be willing to share household tasks.	.76
	E15	A husband should be just as willing as a wife to stay home from work and care for a sick child.	.70
	E14	A husband should not be bothered if his wife makes more money than he does.	.68
	E18	A husband should not be upset if his wife's job sometimes requires her to be away from home overnight.	.66
	E22	If both husband and wife are employed, he should be willing to move if she is offered a better job in another town.	.65

[a]Coding for item was reversed from that shown on questionnaire.

TABLE 4. SIGNIFICANT MULTIPLE REGRESSION MODELS OF FAMILY TASK SHARING FOR HUSBANDS

Dependent Variable[a]	Independent Variable(s)[b]	Std B	R^2	F
Meal-Preparation Tasks	Husband As Coprovider/ Coparent (HCC)	.24**	.14	8.88**
	One Career Family	-.20**		
	Family Role	-.16*		
Child-Care Tasks	Two Career Family	.25**	.13	5.03**
	Husband as Coprovider/ Coparent (HCC)	.23**		
	Wife as Complement (WC)	-.22**		
Maintenance-and-Repair Tasks	Community Role	-.20**	.04	6.38**
Management of Family Activities	Family Role	.19**	.04	6.00**
Financial Management	Two Career Family	.25**	.06	10.52**
Cleaning Tasks	Two Career Family	.29**	.15	9.10**
	Family Income	-.20**		
	Wife as Complement (WC)	.20**		
Lawn-and-Garden Tasks	Family Income	-.20**	.04	6.22**

[a]Categories of Family Task Sharing.

[b]Significant regression models after any independent variable providing a nonsignificant contribution to the prediction of the dependent variable was removed via the Stepwise Procedure.

**$p \leq .01$

*$p \leq .05$

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